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**JIM FOLSOM, Jr.**  
Lt. Governor

**STATE OF ALABAMA**

**Chip Hill**  
External Affairs

### **Lt. Governor Jim Folsom, Jr. Embarks on Historic Mission to China**

(Montgomery) Lieutenant Governor Jim Folsom will join a group of the nation's lieutenant governors on an economic development and humanitarian mission to China October 5 – 12, 2008. The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) sponsored mission is the first of its kind and will include meetings with high-ranking officials and visits to earthquake affected cities.

"The NLGA mission will take place days after the People's Republic of China's 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which coincided with their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of reform," said NLGA Director Julia Hurst. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said on the country's September 29, 2008, anniversary that China will continue to "stick to reform and open up, promote social harmony and strive for new achievements in building a moderately prosperous society."

"At this moment in history, U.S.-China trade is at historic highs and an increased level of dialogue exists," said Hurst. "China just hosted the Olympics and the United States Census Bureau reported in July that China is the second largest trading partner of the U.S.," said Hurst. The lieutenant governors of Alabama, Connecticut, Kansas, Nevada, and Wisconsin will participate in the mission.

"The rising economic and diplomatic power of China makes the country of great strategic importance to the United States and Alabama," said Folsom. "It benefits Alabama and the nation for officials to use available diplomatic channels and opportunities to both learn and encourage change." This mission is an opportunity for me to promote investment in Alabama, while making important contacts within China's economic and political sectors to leverage future growth for Alabama's economy."

The agenda includes three days in Beijing, one day in Chengdu, one day in Mianyang, and two days in Shanghai. The lieutenant governors will meet with Vice Premier Zhang Dejiang, Vice Minister of Commerce Ms. Ma Xiuhong, officials of the Pudong Economic Development Zone, the mayors of two earthquake stricken cities, and other officials. This mission includes an exchange on conservation of endangered species and natural habitats in relation to the Chinese Panda Research Center, also an example of educational tourism.

The trip is hosted by the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) through work with the People's Friendship Organization and the People's Republic of China. The mission is the first time the People's Republic of China has initiated and fully funded a multi-state delegation of this kind.

